

# REASURES Vindication :

OR

A Check to all those who  
affirm Nature to be vile, wicked,  
corrupt, and sinful.

- 1. In eight Scriptural Arguments.
- 2. The opposers main Objections an-  
swered.
- 3. A distinction between Human and  
Divine Nature.
- 4. That it is contrary to certain spiritual  
truths without God's free gift.
- 5. The excellent use of this doctrine.

In answer of

- 1. Works
  - 2. Providence.
  - 3. Providence
  - 4. Works
- Then how pre-  
judicial is the  
contrary Do-  
ctrine to all!

By Capt. Robert Everard.

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He that judgeth the wicked, and he that condemns  
with the just; now they both are an abomination  
unto the Lord. Prov. 17. 15.

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# To the R E A D E R.

I having (By the assistance of God) discovered the fallibility of men's judgements, especially in points of Doctrine: And that some then who were eminent and highly esteemed in this Nation, have not only acknowledged their mistakes in many things, both in points of Doctrine and Practise; but also forsaken them, confessing their weakness; though they were men of great parts, nothing inferior to many eminent Scholars, both for sharpness of wit, and experience in the Tongues: Being also in their chiefest strength of memory, and industriously disposed in searching Authors for their assistance; and yet have been at a

## To the Reader.

greatest loss as aforesaid : I therefore judge, that all who have experience with me in the like case, may be easily induced to try the Doctrines or Conclusions of any man, though accompanied with all the aforesaid Virtues. -

I read that the chief Priests were the principal men that perswaded the people to have hard thoughts of our Lord Jesus Christ, accounting him more unworthy than a Murderer, *Mark* 15. 10, 11. who persecuted him through envy, and that with such vigour and fierceness ; that the Governour perceiving their wickedness, (that is to say, how maliciously they endeavoured to improve their interest they had in the hearts of the people) demanded, *What evil hath he done ?* [It seems that Governors may have a discovery of the envy, spite, and malice of such Priests ; and I hope our Governors are not altogether insensible of it.]

It may then from hence be concluded, that the general cry of the most Learned, hath and may lead a people into very wicked, and dangerous, absurdities and errors.

In

## To the Reader.

In like manner there are many learned men that declame against Nature, and incense the people with all might and main to have hard thoughts of Nature ; saying, It is the Fountain of all uncleanness, the Nursery of all wickedness, and the Root and Spawn of all sin ; persuading the people to bewail their Nature, and to put up Petitions to its chief Governour, the only Lord God ; inciting the people to set all their sins on Nature's score, alledging that all the wickedness we commit is long of Nature, it is so vile, sinful, and corrupt.

Hearing (I say) this voice lifted up, I made enquiry after the certainty hereof, demanding of such Teachers where the Lord had so spoken, that Nature was so wicked ? I likewise enquired what evil it had done ? But they (like the Jews) cryed out the more exceedingly, Let it be crucified. But say I, if you produce not the Word of God for your witness against it, I will wash my hands, and let its blood be upon you.

And although Pilate was willing to please the people, in suffering them to have their wills ; yet dare not I do so in Na-

## To the Reader.

ture's cause ; but shall (God willing) endeavour its vindication, by summoning a Jury of known worth and integrity, which are known Counsellors from the Lord, and who shall judge with righteousness (by the appointment of God) all matters of difference in point of faith, both in this world, and in the world to come.

And in regard I have preached upon this point before many people, I was willing (at the request of some friends) to print it, to prevent mistakes ; if in others or myself, that so they may be rectified and amended : Desiring a blessing of Almighty God ; Farewell.

An

An  
INTRODUCTION  
To the  
Ensuing Discourse.



God who gave mankind a Being, therein declared his power, wisdom, and love; not only in composing them of such materials, as of Earth, Water, Air, Fire, and the Breathings of himself; but also in ordering all the Members of Body and Soul so harmoniously, that every Ingredient hath a dependance upon each other; so that the ill being of any part, or what wrong sauer one receiveth, the other sustaineth less thereby: Such a fellowship there is, that a due consideration of God's manifestation herein, is a way to bring mens hearts back to admiration and adoration of him.

# An Introduction to

to whom both are due. And it was the good pleasure of the Lord to afford this means for the bringing of mankinde into such a frame and temper of minde, to honour and glorifie him; he making them not only capable of receiving light, but also handed the light unto them; Rom. i. 19. And such a light as he desired to be glorified with. And that this light might abide and be increased, he made such plentiful provision, that man cannot pick out, or shew any reasonable excuse to neglect obedience; Rom. i. 20. Acts 14. 17. it appeareth plainly that God would have all men learned: Yea none will deny but that every man hath the Book of the Creation, which is Printed in great Letters, easie to understand the eternall Power and Godhead. This Lecture is not held a day or two in the week only, but every day, and that so every man, and that in their own Tongue or language. The Prophet David, Ps. 19. tells us of an universal University, that teacheth all people the knowledge of God; speaking so loud, that the deafest are forced to hear. And yet for all men have such a sufficient Teaching, many of

# the ensuing Discourse.

of them worship the Creature more than the Creator : Rom. i. 23. Acts 14. 15.

May not I say of such men, as Paul said to the Galathians, chap. 4. 8. That they did service unto them which by Nature are not Gods : As if Paul had said, I am sure that Nature never taught them so ; viz. that those Creatures are to be worshipped as God. For without all controversy, it is inconsistent or altogether disagreeable to Natures behaviour ; as you may see in Rom. 2. 14, 15. For when the Gentiles which had not the Law, did by Nature the things contained in the Law ; &c.

Now in Rom. i. there are two great notorious sins described : the Description of the first that I take notice of, is, they changed God's Worship : Secondly, they changed their natural course, or use.

The first abominable Desolation in changing God's Worship, was, in doing service unto the Creatures, more then unto him which was their Creator : vers. 23. & 25. and indeed so do all men that obey or believe the Traditions or Doctrines of men.

The second diabolish sin was, They chang-

# An Introduction &c.

od their Natural use or course; Surely no man can reasonably judge, in changing a natural course, it could be commended for a virtue; if not, then condemned for a vice; and thus this Argument springs.

## Natures

# NATURES Scandalizers CURBED,

By Scripture and Reason.

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## ARGUMENT I.

If their natural use had been sinful, then had they not sinned in changing it;

But they sinned in changing it.  
Therefore their natural use was not sinful.

Again in verse 25, we see, that those people which changed the truth of God, bring in the Head thereof, a lye; viz. something against truth: So in like manner verse 26, in changing their natural course, they

5 Natures Scandalizers curbed  
they did things against Nature. So the  
Truth of God and Nature, are both op-  
posed by the opposition of wicked people,  
&c. Those wicked actions were up in  
Arms, fighting against the Truth and Na-  
ture, turning them out of their wonted  
paths. Sin is engaged in a very hot contest  
against Nature. It appears sin could not  
woo or court Nature into any willingness,  
but by violence sin brake in against Nature.  
So this is intimated; viz. That Nature  
is against fies proceeded, they sinning con-  
trary to Nature.

### ARG. I.I.

If sin is contrary to Nature, then Nature  
is contrary to sin;  
But sin is contrary to Nature,

Therefore Nature is contrary to sin.

And contraries have contrary conse-  
quences: Now seeing there is such a vast  
difference betwixt Nature and sin, let no  
man say they are all one, or agreed to walk  
together; for the society of sin is inconsis-  
tent to the well being of Nature and it was  
God's free love to make Jesus Christ mani-  
fested in the flesh, to destroy sin; calling it  
the

the work of the Devil. But he was not  
sent to destroy Nature, neither was that  
ever called the work of the Devil : There-  
fore let no man couple them together, for  
they are unequally yoked.

Again, If we view the skies of this  
Text once more, we may see another star  
appearing, to give light into Natures Chri-  
stianity ; being one part of the text doth con-  
sist of such a strong Argument, or a Reason  
rendered to prove that indeed they were vi-  
tiously affected, viz. They did things against  
Nature.

Observation, That it is an infallible  
signe of a wicked condition in any man or  
woman, that acts in opposition to their own  
Nature.

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### ARG. III.

If those that act against their Nature are  
in a wicked condition, as persons vilely  
affected ; then it is a wicked condition  
in any man to incense a people to act  
against their own Nature :

But those that act against their own Na-  
ture are in a wicked condition, as per-  
sons vilely affected ;

Therefore

Therefore it is a wicked command in every man, to incense people against their own Nature.

Rom. 1. 27. We read of a wicked error charged upon vicious affected people, and of a dreadful Judgement of God laid upon them, as a penalty humble to their wicked error, &c; a departure from the dictates of Nature.

Obſerv. A departure from Nature, is a turning to Error.

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#### A R G . I I I .

If Mens or Womens striving or doing things against Nature is a very wicked Error, then Nature is not the Author or Propagator of Error;

But Mens or Womens striving or doing things against Nature, is a very wicked Error,

Therefore Nature is not the Author or Propagator of Error.

If you cast an eye of impartiality into the 28. verse, there is easily to be seen another spark of true fire descending from above, to burn the wings of that opinion which speaks so evil of Nature, from flying up

spared down the world of Church, to confound the hearts of God's people: These are the words of the Apostle, Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, etc.

That which may be learned from these words is, That God brought upon them a very dreadful Judgement, as a recompence or a penalty of their erring against Nature, viz. God gave them over to a reprobate mind.

Observe. That a disapprobation of Nature, is the road to a reprobate mind.

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#### A R. C. V.

If to teach a people to a disapprobation of Nature, is a way to make them in a reprobate mind, then to teach a people to a disapprobation of Nature, is a way to bring a people to destruction:

But to teach a people to the disapprobation of Nature, is a way to make them in a reprobate mind.

Therefore to teach a people to a disapprobation of Nature, is a way to bring a people to destruction.

Rom

2 Tim. 3. - compared with 2 Tim. 3.  
They come with open cry, declaring  
the sinfulness of their condition which were  
without natural affections; shewing that  
they were destitute of all other good dispo-  
sitions: The words are these, *Without un-  
derstanding, Covenant breakers, without  
natural affections, implacable, unmerciful,  
without natural affections, Treue breakers,  
false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers  
of those that are good.*

Obliv. That those which are without  
unnatural affections, are full of all evil af-  
fections.

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#### ARG. VI.

If there is a complaint in Scripture for  
want of natural affections, then natural  
affections are not vile, sinful, or corrupt,  
But there is a complaint in Scripture for  
want of Natural affections,  
Therefore natural affections are not sin-  
ful, vile, or corrupt.

Rom. 2. 14, 15. For when the Gentiles  
which have not the Law, do by Nature the  
things contained in the Law, these having  
not the Law, are a Law unto themselves;  
which

which form the work of the Law written in their hearts, their Conscience affording witness, and their thoughts the main while accusing or excusing one another. These two verses speak very sensibly of Natures behaviour, as two faithful witnesses, to stop a scandal of reproach that was cast upon Nature; to give full satisfaction to all that shall doubt, question, or scruple any thing concerning Natures behaviour in men. As if the Apostle had said, he was in the darkest place in the world; viz. among the Heathen or Gentiles, and there he did two notable pieces of service in vindication of God's righteousness: 1. Unto the Doer of the Law; 2. Unto the Violater of the Law. As for those that did the things contained in the Law, he was a great Assistant: it seems that Nature lent forth its helping hand to that work; viz. To help men to obey the Law of God: for the Apostle saith, They did by Nature the things contained in the Law.

Observe, That there is a fitness or correspondence with the Law of God and Nature; then there is no incongruity or unagreement in them to each other.

ARG. VII.

**F**or Nature is an Instrument to instigate  
men to a conformity of the Law of God,  
then Nature is not an Instrument to  
new instigate men to offend God;

True Nature is the Instrument to instruct  
men to a conformity of the Law  
of God, according to the Word of Christ.

Therefore Nature is not an Instrument  
to instigate men to offend God.

Again, Nature is very active; as we may find vers. 15. by at work very hard with the Law, in accusing some notorious offenders: So that I may say of Nature in this place, as Paul saith of the Law in Rom.

¶ Ps. 23. The Law works wrath; viz. in  
the condemning power of it there lieth  
dreadful apprehension, with a very grim  
countenance, flying in the face of any man,  
without respect of persons; as you may  
read in ver. 9. To subdue him, extinguish of spi-  
rit, upon every soul that doth evil, &c.

Now if men take pleasure in breaking the Law, it is the pleasure of the Law to break their peace; it is one proper effect of the Law to be administering this kind of wrath:

by Scripture and Reason.

and so long as men continue sinning against the light, the wrath of God will abide with them; for, they are inseparable companions. And so the Apostle told the Ephesians in chap. 2. ver. 3. When they had their conversations in times past, in the lust of the flesh, fulfilling the desires thereof; and of the mind, when they (were thus disobedient) were the children of wrath even as others; viz. Whether Jew or Gentile, the Law and Nature, or the Law of Nature; if men will be so bold as to make an attempt, to commit assault and Battery upon that Law that worketh wrath, then by the same Law they shall be made the children of wrath; whether it be a Law written in the heart, or a Law engraven in stone; they both produce the same effects: as in ver. 15. which shew the works of the Law written in their hearts, their Consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts accusing, &c. Now the accusations of Conscience is an heavie burthen: the Wise man saith, A wounded Conscience who can bear? which is an accusing Conscience for sin. So he that obeyeth not the wrath of God abideth on him; and so long as the wrath of God abideth

Natures Scandalizers curbed  
upon the apprehension of any, so long they  
are the children of wrath : For the Law  
worketh wrath, whether it be that engra-  
ven in stone, or fixed in nature ; its a na-  
tural effect of the Law, to produce thereof  
upon the Transgressors ; So they are the  
children of wrath by Nature.

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### A R G. VIII.

To prove Nature hath a hand in work-  
ing wrath, as hath the Law; but  
none in the work of Sin.

**I**F an accusing Conscience is a work in  
Nature, as to produce the wrath of  
God against sin, then Natures incli-  
nation is no countenancer of sin ;  
But an accusing Conscience is a work  
in Nature, as to produce the wrath of  
God against sin;  
Therefore Natures inclination is no  
Countenancer of sin.

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### O B J E C T. I.

**T**Hough Nature was good at its first  
Creation, yet our Father Adam sinned,  
viz. He brake the commands of God, and so  
he corrupted his Nature.

*Answ.*

*by Scripture and Reason.*

*Ans<sup>r</sup>.* That our Father Adam sinned against God, by breaking his Law, is agreed upon by both parts; which I do not only grant, but maintain; because the word of the Lord hath spoken it. But to the latter clause of the Objection, where you say, *So he corrupted his Nature.*

I answer, If by corruption of Nature you mean he did such an abuse to it, that endeavoured to destroy or violate Nature, that do I freely grant to be a truth: for such a corruption or violation, Nature is capable to partake of, and that through or by mens oppressing or wresting it out of its proper office whereunto it was assigned by the providence of God. Read 2 Cor. 2. 17.

And in like manner are the Laws or Covenants of God liable to receive such indignities at or by the hands of wicked men; for so saith the Prophet Malachi, chap. 2. vers. 8. *But ye are departed out of the way, ye have caused many to stumble at the Law, ye have corrupted the Covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of Hosts.*

If any demand who had done this great injury or wrong unto the Covenant, by corrupting it; the Prophet hath given a

A diuers & commendable entred  
information, laying, O ye Priests :  
may read in the first verse, and so for-  
wards. So under such a consideration, the  
Law and Nature, or the Law of Nature,  
With the Covenant of God, may be said  
to suffer affronts, being wrested or corrupted  
by the actings of wicked men : And yet  
for any man to say the Covenant was cor-  
rupted, would be proved to be a very cor-  
rupt laying, every way unsavory or distaste-  
ful to God and good men. Therefore when  
men have done all the wickedness they can  
in blamishing God's Covenant, by casting  
their sins as dirt in the face of it ; yet this  
their civil dealing with the Covenant, will  
in no wise authorise any man to say that  
the Covenant is corrupt. So though Na-  
ture in such a sense may be trampled under  
foot by all the weight that vile affected  
persons had, have laid, or shall lay upon it,  
say though it be spit, stiled, or murdered  
by the hand of the foresaid persons, viz.  
wicked people ; now for any to come and  
affirm that Nature is corrupt ; such an one  
(I say) doth endeavour to justify the evil  
Doers in all their wicked actions done  
against Nature. But if any one shall say,  
that Nature hath received a mortal wound,

it is put into a Consumption, and so is in a decaying vanishing estate, and that he cannot abide long in this world, no nor a day in God's account (which is a thousand years) no man or woman must expect in this life to tyranize over Nature so long; no nor the chaste Philosopher that loved that wisdom, to drown Nature, by giving of it the best entertainment for its accommodation, for the preservation thereof; But Nature's made subject (though not willingly) to drink of that Cup, viz. Mortality; So as Peter saith of Gold and Silver, in his Epist. I. chap. 1. vers. 18. So say I of Nature; That it is corruptible as Silver and Gold, whose corruptibleness doth consist in the smallness of its worth, compared with the blood of Christ; For the Apostle saith, *Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as Silver and Gold, &c. but with the precious blood of Christ.*

So in Nature, if you will make this candid construction of its corruptibleness, that it is not valuable with the blood of Christ, or that it groaneth under an unsupportable burthen, viz. a perishing condition; if any do mean so when they say Nature is corrupt, then I conclude with them; though

be not such a form of words, viz.  
that Nature is sinful.

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### OBJECT. II.

Ephes. 2. 3. Among whom also we all  
had our conversion in times past, in  
the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desire of  
the flesh, and of the mind ; and were by  
Nature the children of wrath, even as  
others. And now because the Apostle saith,  
We were all the children of wrath by Na-  
ture, many make this conclusion, That  
their Nature was or is sinful ; otherwise  
(say they) we could not be the children of  
wrath by Nature ; But we were the chil-  
dren of wrath by Nature, Therefore the  
children of sin by Nature.

Answ. I. First, it will be necessary to  
understand what is meant by the term  
Wrath : And because Wrath is variously  
taken, I judge it as needful in the second  
place, to declare what is meant by Wrath  
in this Text, Ephes. 2. 3. Thirdly, It will  
be as requisite, to shew how men or wo-  
men are, were, or may be the children of  
that wrath. Fourthly, To make a disco-  
very how those Ephesians, or any other  
people

K. 7. 10.

people, were said to be, or are the children of Wrath by Nature. And lastly, I shall make a clear distinction, shewing, proving, or maintaining, that it is one thing to be the children of Wrath by Nature, and another thing to be the children of sin by Nature; or that Nature is sinful. Now that they were the children of wrath by Nature, I do not disown; as will appear by my endeavouring to maintain the Truth thereof: And as for the other opinion that many desire to promote; viz. That we are or were the children of sin by Nature; I have or shall shew you the untruth or falsehood thereof; and so hinder its preferment: For bearing any rule or high esteem in the hearts of the people of God.

Ques. i. What is meant by Wrath?

Ans<sup>w</sup>. Sometimes it is taken for the anger of a man: And David giveth men rebuke, bidding them Cease from it: *Psal. 37. 8. Cease from Anger, and forsake Wrath:* and he giveth them a sufficient reason why they should not be so angry or wrathful, ver. 9. *The evil Doer shall be cut off:* and in *Psal. 55. 3.* he maketh a complaint to God of his enemies hatred, saying; *In wrath they hate me:* And the Apostle

birds men be angry, but give them  
very good caution, viz. See not; neither let the Sun go down in your wrath;  
imputing that mens anger wants bridling,  
and so many times or too often it exceeds  
the bounds, is breaking forth into extremities, and is very liable to have encouragement  
longer then its time; when men are unwilling  
to give it a stop, but lay the rents upon  
the rock of it, it runs into divers other in-  
convenient courses. Therefore the Apostle's  
admonition to the Ephesians, ch. 4. v. 31.  
comes very suitable; Let all bitterness, and  
wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil  
thinking, be put away from you; with all  
malice. Prov. 16. 34: The wrath of man  
is a messenger of death. And sometimes this  
wrath is over much prevalent, or very  
frequently exercised against those men that  
speak of Doctrines, which knock against  
the gain or profit that is made of Religion;  
as appeareth Acts 19. 26, 27, 28. Moreover,  
ye see and hear, that not alone at  
Ephesus, but almost throughout Asia,  
where Paul hath perswaded and turned away  
many people; saying. That they are no gods  
which are made with hands; So that now  
every day Christ is in danger to be set at  
nought,

great God of Diana you will say; for  
her magnificence should be left undreamt of  
all Asia, and the world worshippeth. And  
when they heard these sayings, they were  
full of wrath, and cried out; magnifying  
the work of their hands. And is it not the  
same case now, when men cry out, being  
full of wrath, against such men who preach  
against them gain? viz. that intolerable  
burthen of Tythes. So much concerning  
the wrath of man, which accomplisheth  
not the righteousness of God, but the  
wrath of God doth.

*Ques. 2. Wherein doth the wrath of  
God consist?*

*Ans.* It is that dislike or discounte-  
nance which the Lord declarereth against the  
evil Doers or the prefetions of God's  
displeasure, indignation and anger; it is  
the messenger of the Lord, to give men a  
check in their progress of sin; or the hand  
of the Lord against sinners, to strike them  
with trouble of spirit, and amazement or  
astonishment; the furious sight of God,  
the terrible apparitions of him; the revela-  
tion of his righteous judgements, it's the  
wicked man's wages for evil works, and

you have an apprehension of God : And as  
you have warranty of him, for God hath  
several judgments answerable to mens in-  
tentions of sins. God is the only dispenser  
of this his wrath ; i.e. by his appoint-  
ment his wise ordering hand hath propor-  
tionated wrath incalpable to his righteousness,  
both for the nature of it, and the manner  
of its sealing upon men, with the quantity  
or the degrees of it, with executions to the  
persons, times, and places of wrath's han-  
dicaps. So you may see the executor of  
wrath is God, from whence he had his ori-  
ginal being ; it's part of his counseled course  
into the world to stop many of hises from  
continuing in sin, and it is extremely mis-  
fired ; and intendeth as the prevention of  
the eternal wrath of God, which shall be  
executed at the last day upon those that dy  
in unbelief, as appeareth by these following  
Scriptures. Num. 16. 46. 1 Chron. 27.  
24. 2 Chron. 19. 2. Isa. 13. 9. 10. Psal.  
34. 8. Jer. 21. 5, 6. Matth. 3. 7. Luke  
21. 23. 2 Kings 22. 13. 1 Chron. 29. 8.  
Jude, 2. 14, 15. So much concerning the  
wrath of God.

Qne. 3. Who are the children of  
wrath ?

Answ.

All people whom the Lord  
blesseth with the apprehension of his in-  
dignation, as in Rom. 3. 8, 9. But unto  
them that are contentious, and do not obey  
the truth, but glory in unrighteousness ; in-  
dignation and wrath, revilement and an-  
guish, pass every foul blot both evil ; of the  
 Jew first, and also of the Gentile. And in  
Act. 2. 37. There is a people in the like  
condition, under the sense of God's disap-  
probation of them ; who were pricked or  
pierced in their hearts with the apprehensi-  
ons of God's indignation, having a sting of  
a wounded conscience troubling them,  
 whereby they cryed out as men bereaved,  
and without any hope of safety, or fa-  
vor with God ; saying, what shall we do ?  
and the prophet answered them to Repent,  
and be Baptized according to the com-  
mand of God ; and it appear, many of  
them received the counsel, and so were par-  
takers of such a promise as did dissolve and  
banish away the guilt of sin that lay upon  
their consciences ; as appeareth v. 41. that  
instead of horror of conscience, they re-  
ceived joy and gladness, and so were deli-  
vered from that wrath, viz. an accusing  
conscience. But those that received no

or believed not the glad tydings of the  
Gospel, the wrath of God abideth on  
them ; and so they are the children of  
wrath, which walk after the delight or  
pleasure of their own minds ; *treasures up*  
*wrath against the day of wrath* ; *the revo-*  
*lution of the righteous judgement of God.*  
*Rom. 2. 5.* and the *Ephesians* whom the  
Apostle speaks of or unto, in *chap. 2. vers*  
*2, 3.* where he gives a description of what  
manner of life it was they lived in, when  
they were the children of wrath ; the  
words being these : *Wherin in times past*  
*ye walked according to the course of the*  
*world, according to the power of the Prince*  
*of this Ayr, the spirit that now worketh in*  
*the children of disobedience : Among whom*  
*also we had our conversation in times past,*  
*in the lust of our flesh and of the mind, and*  
*were by Nature the children of wrath,*  
*even as others : And from hence it is very*  
*safe to conclude, that they lay under the ap-*  
*prehensions of God's displeasure ; so long*  
*as they continued in such a course of*  
*life, they had the same Tribulation,*  
*wrath, or anguish of spirit, that other*  
*disobedient persons were partakers of,*  
*so they were the children of wrath evn as*  
*others*

others that believed not, on whom the wrath of God doth abide until they repent themselves of their wickedness, by the receiving of the grace of God, or the glad tidings of the Gospel; wherein was conveyed the comfortable apprehensions of God's favour, which dismisseth the guilt of their conscience; and so the Apostle writ, *They were the children of wrath, but God who is rich in mercy, thorow his grace hath altered their condition, so that now they are not the children of wrath.* Thus I have declared who are the children of wrath.

*Quest. 4. How are they the Children of wrath by nature even as others?*

*Answ.* They were made the Children of wrath by Nature in the same manner as the other people were that the Apostle writ of in Rom. 2. 15. As you may read comparing the thirteenth verse of the first Chapter, where it is very clear that God placed in men a Light, which in the one operation of it had such an Essentia property, as the true effects of the aforesaid Light printed or written in them whose nature did not onely make a discovery of transgression, but also profer'd its full ef-

inquisition by the authority of God, by bring-  
ing the Offender at the Bar of his Justice,  
which produceth tribulation, wrath, or an-  
guish of Spirit; and indeed this light was  
very well acquainted with all the passages,  
windings, and turnings which are in the  
heart: So that when men go contrary to  
that rule of light which God hath placed  
within them as a true Governour, then in  
a Magisterial way it doth so correct as Gods  
Minister of wrath; and I allude the carri-  
ages of nature to a true Magisterial adminis-  
tration agreeable to Rom. 13. 4. *For he*  
*is the Minister of God to thee for good, but*  
*if thou do that which is evil, be afraid, for*  
*he beareth not the sword in vain. For he*  
*is the Minister of God, a Venger, to*  
*execute wrath upon him that doth evil.*  
Now a Magistrates wrath is the shewing  
his discontenence to sin (according to  
Lawes made known,) that shall disturb  
the true Peace of a Common-wealthe: now  
Magistrates have not been so infallible,  
but that they have and may be deceived;  
or else do things unadvisedly; and so they  
do, that pass the bounds of their Rule,  
either by Favour in *Effe* or *Posse*;  
or for any respect to one, with  
the

and in their hearts against one another; and  
that partiality is such an' evill quality, that  
the light of nature is not guilty of; for the  
Law of nature respecteth no person for all  
bove each other, but shoots with an even  
hand his dreadful Darts into the very heart  
of all such offenders, if Kings, Houses, Lords,  
as remarkable Presidents, made to beware  
to all Parliamentes, Council of States, Ge-  
nerals, or any other Officers of State; and  
to be sure he hath met with those kind of  
men called Clergymen, for their ryching con-  
tentiousness and false Doctrines; and there is  
no man that can escape its hand; if  
they ideal doccietfully in breaking the Law  
of equity which God hath imprinted in the  
hearts of all men, to do as they would be  
done by; the natural Light hath received  
orders from God, to kindle a fire of wrath  
within them that are disobedient, Rom. 2.  
8; and 9. compared with ver. 15. But  
unto them that are contentious, and do not  
obey the Truth, but obey unrighteousnes,  
indignation and wrath, tribulation and  
grief upon every soul of man + that doth evil;  
of the Jew first, and also of the Gr. <sup>eeke</sup>  
Light in man, (that fixed Sr. <sup>ar</sup>) shineth  
in the darkest Region, its the <sup>ar</sup> blazing burn-  
ing

ing Star, consuming those vicious conceits foolishly conjectured viz.: to shrowd themselves under any such imaginations as a thought of Gods not seeing, or taking notice of secret sin; but Conscience is ready, and dischargeth its Office, bearing witness against the evil doer; and whosoever it accuseth, lyeth under the apprehensions of the wrath of God; there is never an Officer in the Field or Garrison, that hath cheated the States Soldiers of any pay, or the State of their coyn, by false musters or otherwise; but the light of Nature will pass its censure on them, giving them the apprehension of a revenging God, which is the wrath of God. If men will delight to heap sin upon sin; then the light of Nature will be as nimble to produce the aforesaid wrath proportionably. There is no Souldier or Seaman, neither yet any other Traveller, that passed the bound of its knowledge, viz.: Natural light. If the stoutest of them did any action of disobedience never so secretly, it hath spyyed them out; seizing upon them, and delivering them into the hands of fears: it can draw the latch, and enter into the Privy Chamber of your hearts; and tell the Drunkard, and the Swearer, or the

the Adulterer, or any of those that live in any known sin (if any such promise themselves peace in these or the like courses) it protesteth against them; and instead of peace, bringeth wrath upon them: so wicked men are the subjects of the wrath of God by Nature. This natural light in man, that great disputant S. Paul makes use of, when he met with contentious persons at *Corinth*; it appeareth there was a dispute in the Church of God, about Behaviour in Attires; some men wearing their hair so exceeding long, that offence was both given and taken thereat; Paul conceiving this dispute might take up a large time for debate; the Apostle refers them to the book of their own accounts; viz., the light of Nature; 1 Cor. 11. 14. *Doth not even Nature it self teach you, that if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?* Thus Nature doth not only bear witness against offenders, but also flyeth in their face, telling them they may be ashamed of their lascivious behaviour, and pours a vial of the wrath of God upon them; if men will follow their own inventions, and so become sinful, as children of the Devil; then comes Nature and makes them the children

28 Natures Scandalizers curbed.

of wrath. So to be a childe of wrath by Nature, is to have a dreadful discovery of God's indignation against sin, which is a proper effect of the Law; Rom. 4. 15. *the Law worketh wrath*. So its the Law of God, whether graven in stone, or the Law of Nature, that makes wicked men the children of wrath by the appointment of God.

Quest. 5. Wherein doth the difference consist of being the children of wrath by Nature, and that saying, we are all made the children of sin by Nature?

Answ. To be made a childe of wrath by Nature, is the work of the Lord, its the plain demonstration or revelation of the righteous judgement of God, which the law of Nature is the minister of, as hath been proved from Rom. 4. 15. 1 Cor. 11. 14. Rom. 2. 14, 15. which Scriptures are not ashamed to own this testimony of Nature; it being one piece of service that God hath put into his hands, to bring shame, wrath, accusing conscience, &c. to the evil doer. But to be made the children of sin by Nature, is so strange a saying, that it cannot be parallel in Scripture; and yet people shew themselves offended, because

cause this point is not entertained; viz. we were the children of sin by Nature. Ask a people how they came to be so sinful; and they presently lay the blame upon their Nature; saying, it is my wicked sinful Nature that caused me to commit all the wickedness that I have done; surely the Apostle was not of that mind, when he summoned in all manner of sin, so that no sinner could escape his hand, he lays them down in these six verses; Rom. 1. 29, 30, 31. 2 Tim. 3. 2, 3. And Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, malice, full of envie, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents; without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affections, implacable, unmerciful; For men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection; truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traytors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more then lovers of God. Paul behaves himself as if he had heard

Nature. Scandal never curbed  
some people make a complaint against Na-  
ture, saying, it hath been the chief Ring-  
leader of all wickedness; so the Apostle  
begins to call all the offences over by name,  
as one making a diligent examination, to  
see if he could disty any natural affections  
amongst those vagrant wicked livers;  
and because they had no affections suitable  
to Nature, therefore the Apostle makes a  
prohibition, declaring that natural affec-  
tions had no hand in promoting any wick-  
edness, no not so much as to give its will-  
ing consent to their sins; but instead there-  
of accusing of them, and telling them they  
might be ashamed to do such things. So  
that Nature makes them not the children  
of sin, but is a discoverer to them of God's  
indignation against sin. So that you may  
see, it is one thing to be the children of  
wrath by Nature, which hath been proved,  
and another thing to be the children of sin  
by Nature; which hath been disproved by  
all those Scriptures from whence the afore-  
said eight Arguments have been naturally  
derived; unto which I shall refer you, and  
all reasonable men.

Q. BJECT. III.

To invade Nature, or to accuse it of sin, is suggested by the gainsayers from Psal. 51. 5. Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Answe. This Scripture speaks on this wise, as David's acknowledgement how he was made ; saying, *I was shapen in sin.* Now no man will deny but God was his Maker ; and I grant that he was made in a sinful woman ; for he said, *in sin did my Mother conceive me.* It's one thing for a woman to conceive a childe, she being a sinner ; it's another thing for the childe to be sinful in the womb ; which is endeavoured to be proved by those that urge this Text : but yet I continue in the Apostles minde, Rom. 9. 11. The children being not yet born, have done neither good nor evil. But children were shapen before they were born, therefore not sinful when they were first shapen ; then if David was not sinful at his shaping, viz. at his first form or Beeing ; how can any man finde any ground to feed such a conceit from this Text, that mens nature is sinful ? if their

Nature had been sinful, then they had been sinful in the mothers wombe, but they were not; as Paul saith, Rom. 9. 11.

### CHAPTER THE OBJECT. IIII.

This quarrel against Nature, is endeavoured to be wrested inclusively (as they call it) from Isa. 48. 8. You, thou heardest not; you, thou knewest not; you, from that time that thine ear was not opened: for I knew that thou wouldest deal very impotently, and wast called a transgressor from the womb.

Answe. In this Text there is nothing at all mentioned concerning the causes of transgression; but it speaks of God that took notice of their treacherous dealings with him. Also here we may learn who transgressed, and the time when they trespassed, and when called transgressors; which I shall freely acknowledge: Who were the transgressors, is laid down by the Prophet in the first and second verses; Hear ye this. O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the Lord, and make mention

mention of the God of Israel, but not in tribute  
nor in righteousness. For they call them-  
selves of the holy City, and stay themselves  
upon the God of Israel, the Lord of Hosts  
is his Name. And in verf. 8. is laid down  
the time when God knew their transgres-  
sion, viz. before they were committed; and  
the time when they were called transgres-  
fers, was, from the womb: now what is  
meant by womb, is necessary to be under-  
stood, to search out the minde of God in  
the Text. For answer, You are to take  
notice, that those people were called *Jacob*,  
and *Israel*, were to hold forth the truth and  
righteousness of God; for which purpose,  
God had declared his minde to them for-  
merly, at the beginning, when they were to  
bear the name of God's people; which  
declaration of God, was a calling them to  
it; as in verf. 3. *I have declared the for-  
mer things from the beginning, and they  
went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed  
them; I did them suddenly, and they came  
to pass.* Now from that time, viz. from  
such a birth of things, as bringing forth, be-  
ing newly conceived; to their or our capa-  
cities, may be said to be from the womb,  
viz. newly or freshly delivered. Now the

Lord

Lord saw a far off their abstinence, informs them what should come to pass, or be done unto such offenders that should so transgres from the beginning, or birth, which came from the bowels or womb of God, *viz.* things newly delivered; as you may read in 4, 5. & 6, verses. Now when God delivered those things to them, they were far from their mothers womb, in reference to time; because God never spake to them when they were infants, as in *Deut.* 13.2. Therefore when he fafh, he declared it unto them from the beginning, cannot be meant that instant time of their Nativity, or at their first appearance in the world, but at the time of their infancy, *viz.* at the first time of God's calling them, or when they first pleaded a propriety to be called the children of *Jacob* or *Israel*: Or thus, when they externally took the name of the God of Israel in their mouths, and being they did it not in truth, neither in righteousness, therefore the God of Israel called them transgressors, from the beginning of that profession, *viz.* from the morning, or the womb of that day; for I conceive their transgression could not precede the Law, if not, then they were transgressors forth-

with

with affoon as they had received the Law, viz. affoon as God had conveyed the influence of the Law, no sooner were they hatched by it, but they run astray, and so transgressed from the very conception of it; and as the morning hath its beginning, so bath every thing, and that beginning may be called the Wombe, as Psal. 110. 3, *'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth;* so the wombe of the morning is the beginning, the very first appearance of the sun: so when sin doth appear, it cannot be but that God hath declared himself first; the immediate sinning rendered them transgressors from the beginning.

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### O B J E C T. V.

**E** Rom. i Cor. 2. 14. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishnes unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. The conclusion asserted from hence is, That because the Natural man receiveth not the things of God, therefore man's Nature is sinful.

Answ.

*Ans<sup>n</sup>.* That this Text doth plead the insufficiency of a natural man, simply so considered to understand the things of God, or to receive them, I grant that such a natural man cannot; and because it hath bin asserted by many, that I cannot evide the face of this Text, I shall take this wafing method for the opening of an entrasee into it.

First, I shall define what is here meant by a natural man.

Secondly, What those things of God are which such a natural man cannot receive.

Thirdly, I will shew why I judge that such a natural man cannot receive such things of God.

Fourthly, I will shew the insufficiency of that conclusion, that saith, therefore Nature is sinful and vile.

Fifthly, Prove that the insufficiency of a natural man, is not that which can render him wicked.

For the first what is here meant by a natural man? The words in the Greek are οὐχὶνδες ἢ ἀνθρώποις, which the Latine renders *Animalis homo, s<sup>o</sup>n non Naturalis*; viz. the phrase *naturalis* is not in the text, and yet for argument sake we shall grant a converti-

converitability in the terms; viz., *Animalia Naturalia*; So that I can safely say, a Natural man receives not the things of God, neither can he; nor yet an unnatural man. I judge that *Adam* was a compleat natural man (and no more) before the fall; and that which causeth me so to judge, is the Apostle's own sayings, in 1 Cor. 15. vers. 45, 46. and that though he was a living man, yet he was not spiritual; and to put the point out of dispute, the Apostle saith, He was a Natural man, lest anyone should think that he was as well Spiritual as Natural; and it will easily appear, that all the works he was employed about were natural, answerable unto his endowments.

To the second, What is meant by the things of God? I answer, The things appertaining to the glory of God, and mans salvation by Jesus Christ; 2 Cor. 4. 18. Things Natural are fading; Things Spiritual are durable riches. 1 Cor. 3. 10, 11. Rom. 1. 11. and in Romans 15. 27. there is a difference between things spiritual, carnal, or natural; and in 1 Cor. 4. 1. he speaketh of Spiritual gifts, which presupposeth a natural Beeing without them.

Quæst.

Quest. 3. How comes it to pass that all natural men cannot receive the spiritual thing?

I answer with the Apostle, because they are spiritually discerned; whereas there is an absolute necessity in discerning things temporal; viz. a distinguishing of colours, a principle to act; to wit, an eye: so also an object. So there is likewise a necessity of a capacity of sight in things spiritual, with the object; otherwise it is impossible that it should be discerned! Instance in Adam who was a natural man, who in that state could not receive spiritual things, the object being not tendered, which was Jesus Christ, or things relating to him; therefore it was impossible for him, or any man else, to receive them, until they are given him of God.

Quest. 4. How doth it appear to be a groundless saying, Because the natural man cannot receive the spiritual things of God, therefore his Nature is sinful?

Answ. It is contrary to the objector's own principle, because they hold that Adam was a man in his first Creation, and so are all other men, until Jesus Christ be revealed to them; but Adam before the fall

fall had not Jesus Christ made known unto him, therefore could not receive the spiritual things of God : I verily judge they would condemn such a saying in any man, viz. that *Adam's* nature was sinful before his fall, though he could not receive the spiritual things spoken of in *1 Cor. 2. 14.* because they related to Jesus Christ.

Quest. 5. *Why do you say it is not mens inability or insufficiency that can give any good ground to prove their Nature sinful?*

*Answ.* It is the denying obedience answerable to abilities or gifts received, which doth deaominate any man to be an unfaithful steward.

Again, *Abraham* could not number the stars; yet he sinned not in letting them alone.

Neither could the Angel do any thing, until *Lot* went out of *Sodom*, and yet not counted a sin. *Moses* could not enter the Tabernacle; and yet his staying without was no sin.

Again, a man cannot add a cubite to his nature: and as sure as mankinde is not to be blamed, because they did not good before they were born, so surely they shall

not

not be blamed for letting that alone which they were or are not in a capacity to do; but men have, shall, and will be reproved, and condemned for not improving their talents, or the grace of God given to them, for to lead them to obedience. *Matth. 25. 18,30. Rom. 2.4. Isa. 5. 3. John 3.19.*

A definition between the human nature, and the divine nature.

The human nature is the essential parts of man, simply so considered, without the accidents which do or may attend him. *Adam* was a man compleat, before motion or action, and that natural, *i Cor. 15.45, 46,47.* upon the corporal being of mankind, and all that is produced by it to be nature, and all the attendancies which God had afforded for its subsistence, to bear the denomination of temporal or natural things, as they so relate; though there be some difference in kind. And for a further description of the human nature, I refer you to *James 1.23. Deut. 34: 7.* the one speaking of a face natural which is to be seen in a glass, the other of corporal eyes, the words being these; and *Moses* was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eys were not dim, nor his natural force abated.

Now

and his natural forces, was his corporal  
being not decayed, God having afforded  
him means to uphold his Tabernacle of  
earth ; which means he had improved and  
God gave that blessing.

And as there is a head of the body na-  
tural, so there is a head of the body spiri-  
tual ; it being a metaphor suitable to the  
Church : As the body does participate of  
the head for all its nourishment, so Christ is  
the head to convey all spiritual enjoyments  
to the body ; that is to say, Saints, of the  
Church : And as there is an absolute ne-  
cessity of meat and drink to come from the  
head, for the maintenance of the body na-  
tural, so there is a necessity for a spiritual  
life to receive refreshment from the head  
Christ. Now one may live a life Natural,  
and yet not be in possession of things spiri-  
tual. And this was the condition of *Adam*  
before the Fall. And when Jesus Christ is  
pleased to communicate himself, he being  
the minister of spiritual things, those things  
being received, are called the Divine Na-  
ture ; then are men said to be spiritual  
men. So the humane nature is that which  
favours of the earth, earthly ; and the Di-  
vine is from heaven, heavenly.

Natures incapacity of it self to attain spiritual things, in relation to Jesus Christ : And one reason why I print this is because I am accused of idolizing Nature, by thos that through ignorance, or wilfully mistake.

I pray you therefore take notice of this caution ; I do not hold that Natures wings were clipt since the Fall, and so disabled to fly up to such spiritual things ; or, that the legs of nature were so broken by the first man's disobedience, so that they could not carry men to Jesus Christ. But I hold that Nature in its fullest strength and glory, even at its first constitution, was not put into such a capacity, viz. to help men to the knowledge of Jesus Christ ; Natures arme was not made so long, as to reach up to the Throne of that Grace : Such a mysterie cannot be decryed with the sharpest eye, or the quickest sight of Nature.

This Council of God lay hid, or locked up in himself so fast, that Natures skill could not make a key to open the Cabinet of so rich a Treasury ; which was not only hid from generations, but even from ages : Col. i. 25, 26. Now if there were any time at all in the which the world was destitute of this life, then it was when Na-

nature was in its prime; viz. Adam's time of innocency; Nature then was even as able to make a Jesus Christ, as to receive him, before the Lord did reveal him.

Yet although Nature was so insufficient at its Creation, the Lord said, *all that he had created was exceeding good*; of which man's nature was a part: Therefore it is not Natures insufficiency for such attainments, that can prove it sinful.

Although all things were created exceeding good, yet not all for one and the same use: though the fangs are good in their kind, yet not to make *Adam* apron strings of; and many of the like instances I could alledge to the same purpose: And yet such incapacities will not authorise any man to call them sinful. So though Nature simply considered be not able to procure any Evangelical light or life, yet let us acknowledge it good for that whereunto it was appointed, for which purpose it was and is good.

The first Use of this point (viz. Natures Vindication) will be very profitable in prayer. For whereas Ministers and people used frequently to make complaints to God, telling him their Nature is so wicked and

the cause of all their miseries, and to they were necessitated to say unto him, crying out, we are all dead in trespasses by Nature.

Which saying of theirs, the word of God will no where countenance, as hath been already cleared, and appeareth in my answer to their suppositions, by an citing of their texts, *Eph. 2. 3.* *1 Cor. 1. 14.* and other Texts by them alledged.

Therefore when you pray, speak not a word against Nature; for it is a wicked thing to act against it: therefore pray with understanding, and forbear vain babling; for whatsoever is not of Faith, is sin: and there is no word of precept, promise, or president, by God, Prophets, or Apostles, to justify any such petitions against Nature. Therefore pray not wavering, but look what the Lord hath promised, and walk in his ways, ye may undoubtedly expect his blessings; but the Lord never promised to hear any prayers against Nature; therefore seek not its destruction, as you tender the glory of God, and your own good.

Some have imagined, that where a heart is truly gracious, and increasing therein, that their Natures must of necessity decrease;

but let such take heed of offending him, as did Moses face, or of censoring his works so many; for without all controversy, he was a very gracious hearted man, and lived one hundred and twenty years, and his Natural force was not abated: *Deut. 34. 7.* So though Nature and Grace are two distinct things, yet the one is not destructive to the other; therefore take heed how you pray against Nature.

A second benefit that this point doth afford, (*viz.* Natures Vindication) is in point of preaching. It is the usual course of most ministers, to tell the people, that the reason why they believe not, is the sinfulness of their Nature; and so spend a great deal of time, which would be far more profitable to inform the people of their wickedness in sinning against Nature, as the Apostle did, *Rom. 1. 28, to 31. 2 Tim. 3. 1, to 5.*

A third use of this point (*viz.* Natures Vindication) will be very serviceable in point of Civl Government, pleading a necessity thereof; for when men will not do as they would be done by, but instead thereof labour to destroy the natural subsistence of each other, by seeking ruination, by decays or violation of the body or estate, whereby

Whereby Nature was or is supported.

Now lest men should break the bounds of Nature, for prevention thereof, men are authorised with power and authority to bear office, for the punishment of evil doers, and the preservation of those that do well, which is the proper work of a Magistrate, to execute justice upon offenders, according to Laws made known; and whosoever exceedeth the bounds thereof are offenders themselves. But if Nature should be such a wicked thing as some say, it is the root of all evil fruits, then were the magistrates the vindicators of wickedness; but the true and sole intention of the Magistrates office, is to punish wicked men for their cruelty in doing things against Nature; so the true ground of Magisterial power, is Natures perniciation.

The fourth Use that may be made of Natures Vindication is, to justifie a lawful war. Now there are two warfares; in a spiritual, the weapons are not carnal; but in a natural, they must be answerable, to defend the opposition of the opposers of Nature: when the Governours have ordered a true execution of Justice upon any capital offenders, who have invaded mens Beings.

Then

Then for prevention of mens further rebellion, a Guard of armed men is very requisite, especially when there is a probability of men bent to oppose justice; so to frustrate their evill intentions, there is a necessity in reason for the good man of the house to stand armed, when he perceiveth the Thief is a coming.

But if it be objected, that war is the destruction of men, and so the destroying of Nature. I answer, there is sometime a necessity of cutting off some members for the preservation of the body; and necessity hath no law. And my desire is, that every man would so far vindicate Nature for its welfare, that they would not surfeet themselves by overcharging their bodies with drink, or any other creature, to the disabling of it, confounding their memories, and so in readiness to do things contrary to Nature. So take heed of evil speaking, which setteth on fire the whole course of Nature. Jam.

3. 16.

F I N I S.